

Section 75 Screening Form

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step-by-step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Review of (NIHE-Administered) Private Sector Home Improvement Grants.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Existing

The primary legislation is [The Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2003](#) - PART III GRANTS, &c. FOR RENEWAL OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

The Housing Executive administer five private sector home improvement grants on behalf of the Department.

The grants support essential repairs and adaptations to private sector housing to enable people to live independently and safely in their homes and include:

- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Repair Grant
- Home Repair Assistance Grant
- Renovation Grant

- Replacement Grant

The purpose of this review is to examine the current policy and legislation that underpins these grants.

The aim of the review is to strengthen the current policy framework and identify areas of improvement within the current grant schemes. The intended outcomes include enhancing accessibility and flexibility of the grant scheme, identifying potential changes to the current scheme to better reflect the needs of service users and ensuring that future policy decisions are informed by stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering.

A 2016 review and subsequent stakeholder engagement highlighted that delays in processing Disabled Facilities Grants disproportionately affect older people, disabled individuals, and those with long-term health conditions, limiting independence and equality of opportunity. Under the Programme for Government 2024–2027, a cross-departmental review involving Disability Action, Omnibus Partnership, DoH, and NIHE is underway to improve responsiveness. While progress has been made, 12,641 households received a DFG in 2024/25 and average waiting times reduced from 1,024 to 808 days, further action is needed to address remaining delays and ensure grants meet urgent needs.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

Yes

If Yes, explain how.

Disability - People with disabilities, and parents of dependants who have a disability will be able to have adaptations made to their home to enable the person with the disability to remain in the home.

Age - In terms of multiple identities, older people who require adaptations due to disability or health conditions will benefit from potential change.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Department for Social Development, Housing Division.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Department for Communities own the policy, it is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

If yes, are they

☒ financial

The Housing Executive are reliant on the Department providing a budget for the grants.

☒ legislative

Potential changes may require an amendment to primary/subordinate legislation.

☐ other, please specify _____

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

☐ staff

☒ service users

☒ other public sector organisations – DoH and NIHE

☐ voluntary/community/trade unions

☐ other, please specify _____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

None

What are they and who owns them?

N/A

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for **each** of the Section 75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	Relevant data sources were reviewed, including Northern Ireland Housing Executive administrative datasets and Department for Communities housing statistics, which provide information on housing supply, tenure, and conditions however these sources do not include data disaggregated by religion. Census 2021 data for Northern Ireland was also considered, including separate outputs on religion and on housing and accommodation, though these are not published in a cross-tabulated format. Available information on previous grant schemes was reviewed, but these did not contain equality-related recipient data. Customer feedback from Customer Satisfaction Survey and Patient Client Council Survey was considered which informed the Departments direction.
Political opinion	NI Family Resources Survey indicates that disability prevalence is broadly comparable across adults political opinion. There is no evidence indicating any relationship between political opinion and need for, or access to, home improvement grants.
Racial group	Census 2021 data shows similar levels of disability across racial groups in Northern Ireland, with no evidence of differing housing adaptation needs.
Age	According to the 2021 Census, 24.3% of Northern Ireland's population (463,000 people) reported that their day-to-day activities were limited by a long-standing health problem or disability. Prevalence increases significantly with age—from 8.1% among children (0–15) to 56.8% of those aged 65 and over. Among people aged 16 and above, mobility impairment is the most commonly reported type of disability.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Marital status	Customer feedback highlighted circumstances where separated parents may face additional housing pressures when accommodating disabled children.
Sexual orientation	NI Family Resources Survey and 2021 Census show broadly similar disability prevalence across sexual orientation groups, indicating no differing housing adaptation needs.
Men and women generally	NI Family Resource Survey indicates that disability prevalence is similar for men and women, and housing adaptation need is driven primarily by disability and age rather than sex.
Disability	The 2021 Census shows 24.3% of the population (463,000 people) report limitations due to a long-standing health condition or disability, rising to 56.8% among those aged 65+, with mobility the most common impairment. The 2023/24 Poverty and Income Inequality report found 37% of the population (710,000 individuals) live in families where someone has a disability. Such households are more likely to live in social housing (23% vs 9%) and face higher housing stress, with 49,000 households on the NIHE waiting list and prolonged delays for adaptations. Evidence from the Patient Client Council survey highlights persistent barriers to accessible housing and healthcare, reinforcing the need for urgent action under the Programme for Government.
Dependants	According to the 2021 Census, 45% of households in Northern Ireland contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability. Of these households, 43% included dependent children, while 57% had no dependent children, highlighting the significant overlap between disability and family responsibilities.

Note to reader - If you are aware of and would like the Department to take into account any further evidence or information relevant to this policy, please send this to Rachael.McHaffie@communities-ni.gov.uk

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Specify details for **each** of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Political opinion	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Racial group	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Age	Older people with disabilities may need adaptations/support to remain living independently and safely in their own home.
Marital status	A proposal to increase the availability of grants to eligible separated parents has been reviewed as part of this screening.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence of any different needs/experiences/priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Disability	People with disabilities may need adaptations/support to remain living independently and safely in their own home. Some users may benefit from improved communication, clearer guidance, and more user-friendly application forms.

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Dependants	Dependants with disabilities may need adaptations/support to remain safely in their own home.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;

- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	Neutral This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people of different religious beliefs.	None
Political opinion	Neutral This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people of different political opinion.	None
Racial group	Neutral This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people from different racial groups.	None
Age	Positive Potential changes are expected to have a positive impact.	Minor
Marital status	Positive The proposal outlined in the consultation would extend eligibility rather than restrict it No differential adverse impacts.	Minor

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Sexual orientation	Neutral This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for people of different sexual orientation.	None
Men and women generally	Neutral This policy is not expected to have an impact on equality of opportunity for men and women in general.	None
Disability	Positive Potential changes are expected to have a positive impact..	Minor
Dependants	Positive Potential changes are expected to have a positive impact.	Minor

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		The policy is aimed at providing financial assistance to allow people with disabilities and families with

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
		disabled dependants to remain in their own homes.
Political opinion		The policy is aimed at providing financial assistance to allow people with disabilities and families with disabled dependants to remain in their own homes.
Racial group		The policy is aimed at providing financial assistance to allow people with disabilities and families with disabled dependants to remain in their own homes.
Age		This will enable older people with disabilities to have adaptations made to their home so they can remain there both safely and independently.
Marital status		The policy is aimed at providing financial assistance to allow people with disabilities and families with disabled dependants to remain in their own homes.
Sexual orientation		The policy is aimed at providing financial assistance to allow people with disabilities and families with disabled dependants to remain in their own homes.

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Men and women generally		The policy is aimed at providing financial assistance to allow people with disabilities and families with disabled dependants to remain in their own homes
Disability		This will enable people with disabilities to have adaptations made to their home so they can remain there both safely and independently.
Dependants		This will enable families with disabled children to have adaptations made to their home so families can remain living together.

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	The proposals are not expected to have any impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs.	None
Political opinion	The proposals are not expected to have any impact on good relations between people of different political opinion.	None
Racial group	The proposals are not expected to have any impact on good relations between people of different racial background.	None

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief	No	The proposals do not offer any opportunity to better promote good relations

Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
		between people of different religious background.
Political opinion	No	The proposals do not offer any opportunity to better promote good relations between people of different political opinion.
Racial group	No	The proposals do not offer any opportunity to better promote good relations between people of different racial background.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

No specific differential impacts relating to multiple Section 75 characteristics can be identified at screening stage. However, the proposal is expected to have neutral to positive effects across several Section 75 categories, including age, disability, marital status and dependants, through improved access to grant support. No evidence has been identified to indicate adverse or disproportionate impacts on individuals who hold multiple identities within these groups.

Part 3. Screening decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please underline one)

1. **Not be subject to an EQIA**
2. **Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)**
3. **Be subject to an EQIA**

If 1 or 2 (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

An EQIA is not required as the screening identified no actual or potential adverse impacts on any Section 75 group, and the policy is expected to have positive impacts for older people, disabled people, and families with disabled dependants

If 3. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, **give the reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

You should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

We will monitor feedback, complaints, and application processing times for any evidence of adverse impact on Section 75 groups.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Mary McNally	Staff Officer NIHE Sponsor Team	18/11/25
Approved by:		
Rachael McHaffie	Deputy Principal	10/02/2026

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.